

История
на
българския
костюм

A HISTORY OF BULGARIAN COSTUME

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SUMMARY

This work represents an attempt to trace back the history of Bulgarian costume from the foundation of the Bulgarian state up till the beginning of the 20th century. It is supplied with rich illustrative material. The black-and-white illustrations are exact reproductions from such authentic sources as exist; the colour ones, which have been re-created from surviving sources, aim to give a more complete visual idea of Bulgarian costume during the historical periods under review. The history of Bulgarian costume is considered as a part of the whole cultural history, seen against the background of general historical development with the fullest possible comparative study of all surviving historical sources. The material in this book is divided into four parts.

Part One: Bulgarian costume during the epoch of early feudalism. It is difficult to re-create exactly the clothing of the time of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. Its general cultural history like its costume contains several interweaving trends — Thracian, Slav, Proto-Bulgarian and Byzantine. The Bulgarian State was founded as a union between the Proto-Bulgarians who had moved into the Balkan peninsula, on the one hand, and the local Slav tribes, on the other. When this union was formed, the Proto-Bulgarians were entrusted with the military command and defence of the territory of the state. For that reason the military garments of the Proto-Bulgarians were preserved and they gradually mixed with the Slav military attire. Women's Slav clothes, being more functional for the conditions of a sedentary way of life, little by little replaced Proto-Bulgarian women's clothing. Monuments have been used as sources for information on Proto-Bulgarians' attire (Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8)¹.

When the Bulgarians were converted to Christianity, the Byzantine court costume was accepted by the Bulgarian court as an official tenue, but only for solemn occasions. The data given by some chroniclers, travellers, and others, such as Bishop Luitprando of Cremona, Leo the Deacon, Theofanes' successor, Ibrahim-ibn-Yakub, and Ioan Skilitza, indicate that for everyday life the sovereign and his courtiers preferred the leather clothes of 'Bulgarian cut', convenient for hunting and riding. Ordinary people's clothing of that period was not influenced by Byzantine fashions.

Part Two: Bulgarian costume during the epoch of advanced feudalism. The 11th and 12th centuries were the period of Byzantine domination. The local feudal lords copied the Byzantine aristocratic costume, which they fully accepted. Ordinary people's clothes did not change significantly. Only some elements of Byzantine aristocratic costume penetrated to their level via the Bulgarian boyars' attire, but these elements were strongly modified in accordance with the functional requirements, material resources and taste of the people.

Valuable pictorial records dating back to that period are: the mural portraits of Tsar Konstantin-Assen (1257—1277) with Tsaritsa² Irina in Boyana church (11), and Sebastocrator³ Kaloyan with his wife Dessislava (13) in the same church. Tsar Konstantin-Assen is painted in full dress with Tsar's full regalia — crown, 'loros'⁴, gold sceptre and 'akakia'⁵. The portrait of Dessislava, which is one of the most remarkable art records of the 13th century contains exceptionally valuable data on the development of costume. It indicates that by contrast with the Tsar's ceremonial costume which preserved full Byzantine solemnity, the attire of the ruling class was influenced by western fashions borrowed probably by way of Constantinople. Dessislava wore the fashionable chin-ribbon which Irina also wore, though she was a Tsaritsa.

Other mural paintings in Boyana church contain data on ordinary people's costume from the 13th century. The basic part of their clothing was the tunic which fell to the ground in women's attire and reached the calf of the leg in men's garments.

For the study of Bulgarian costume of the 15th century there are more numerous and richer sources — the portrait

¹ These numbers refer throughout to the illustrations.

² Tsar and Tsaritsa — Bulgarian titles for King and Queen.

³ Sebastocrator — Byzantine title for Prince.

⁴ 'loros' — wide ribbon, symbol of Tsar's power.

⁵ 'akakia' — a small bag of red leather with soil in it, symbol of Christian humility.

of Tsar Ivan-Alexander (1331—1371) in Bachkovo monastery (16), donors' portraits in the cavern-churches near Ivanovo, Rousse district, the portraits of unknown donors in the old church of Kalotina village, Sofia district (18 and 19), the portraits of Despot Deyan, his wife Doya and members of their family in the Church of St John Bogoslov (The Theologian) in the monastery of the village of Zemen, Pernik district (20), the mural paintings in the 14th century Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Veliko Turnovo (22), the mural paintings found in excavations at Trapezitsa, Veliko Turnovo (23, 24, 33 and 36), the miniature portraits in the Manasses' Chronicle and the London Gospel (27 and 28).

Clothing of Byzantine type survived right into the 14th century, e. g. the Tsar's full ceremonial dress. The attire of the ruling classes, however, underwent certain changes, chiefly under the influence of western fashions. Characteristic here is the basic change in the pattern of the top garment — the semi-circular Byzantine mantle with a tunic under it was replaced to a large extent by a long top garment with or without an opening along the whole front part and with long sleeves that had a slit in their upper part through which the hand could be extended. The typical mediaeval fashion of 'mi-parti' had arrived.

The women's top garment was always worn without a belt. The hats and kerchiefs are particularly characteristic and outstanding for their variety and beauty.

Ordinary people's clothes did not change quickly or easily. The Slav and Proto-Bulgarian 'nogavitsa'¹ survived in men's clothes and leather garments continued to be worn. A basic part of the clothing was still the tunic, which ordinary townsfolk wore shorter than the boyars.

Part Three. Bulgarian costume from the beginning of the Turkish domination up till the Bulgarian National Revival. In the 15th century the Bulgarian people had yet to suffer the cruel terror of Turkish oppression. Signs of the culture of a people which had crossed the threshold of the Renaissance were still apparent. The donors' portraits (37, 40) surviving in Dragalevtzi and Kremikovtzi Monasteries bear eloquent testimony to this.

In the 16th century, however, the yoke of servitude brought darkness and misery to the whole people. The new conditions of life created new forms of clothing. Although we lack pictorial monuments from that period, a number of itineraries written by foreigners who passed through the Bulgarian lands (Felix Petančić, Benedikt Kuripešić, Benedetto Ramberti, Busbeck, Stephan Gerlach and others) contain fragmentary data which indicate that the thread of tradition running right back from the national costume of the end of the 19th century to the dawn of the Renaissance was never severed. The only pictorial record from the 16th century is the amateur drawing of Salomon Schweigger, inserted in his itinerary of 1578.

Pictorial records preserved from the 17th century, i. e. donors' portraits in the church of the village of Dobarsko, Blagoevgrad district (44 and 47), and in the church of the village of Arbanassi, Veliko Turnovo district — and, likewise, such records from the beginning of the 18th century as the donors' portraits in Glozheneh Monastery (54) prove that up till the middle of the 18th century there were no traces of Turkish influence on Bulgarian costume. Insignificant elements of such an influence can be found in the attire of rich townsfolk about the middle of the 18th century at the earliest.

Part Four: Bulgarian costume during the epoch of the Bulgarian National Revival. The 19th century brought the Bulgarian National Revival. The political and economic conditions of that time determined the fundamental changes in clothing which was marked by strong European influence penetrating chiefly by way of Russia. Popular among the Bulgarian educators and intellectuals was the European fashion called 'a la franga', i. e. 'in French fashion' (71, 72, 73).

Abundant ethnographical materials on 19th century Bulgarian national costumes have survived. These are extremely variable but in general they can be classified according to several basic types. Men's garments are divided by districts into 'white clothes' and 'black clothes' costumes. There are several mixed types. Women's clothes are of the apron (one-apron and two-apron), 'sukman'² and 'saya'³ types. The men's 'white clothes' costume is the older of the two types. The apron type costume is the oldest among the women's clothes; the 'sukman' type is newer; comparatively the most recent is the 'saya' (77, 78, 81, 83, 91 and 92).

After the Liberation, due to the new economic conditions and development of industry, new manufactured materials which were till then unknown in the national costume began to penetrate gradually in it.

After the Ninth of September 1944, the fundamental political and economic changes in Bulgaria produced a rapid levelling of clothes in town and in village alike. The national costumes now preserved in the ethnographic collections are rich sources for creating new patterns in textile fabrics and fashion styles.

¹ 'nogavitsa' — a kind of sock resembling a trouser-leg.

² 'sukman' — a dress, usually sleeveless, which is put on over head.

³ 'saya' — upper garment of a woman which is opened along the whole front part and is put on like a coat.

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¹Chorbadi — title for squire or man of property.

²Titles of respect for grandfather and grandmother.

74. Male national costume and 'a la franga' costume ('in the French style') from the beginning of the second half of the 19th century.
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¹ 'dzhamadan' — a kind of jacket.

² 'elek' — male or female short sleeveless jacket.

³ 'poturi' — kind of wide breeches in male national costume.

⁴ 'menteh' — a short jacket, but longer than the 'elek'.

⁵ 'benevretsi' — tight breeches.

⁶ 'kolchatsi' — knee-guards sewn on the trousers.

⁷ 'manofil' — special summer white top garment like 'sukman'.

⁸ 'keneh' — kind of lace sewn with a needle.

91. Summer 'saya' from Gyumyurdzhina district, used till the beginning of the 20th century.
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¹ 'brachnik' — pleated apron worn on hind part of the body.



9. Български цар и царица в ежедневен костюм от средата на XIII век



14. Български болярски (севастократорски) тържествен костюм от средата на XIII век (мъжки и женски)



21. Български болярски костюми от XIV век



29. Български цар и царица в тържествен костюм и орнат от XIV век (от втория период на царуването на цар Иван-Александър)



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46. Мъжки и женски костюм на богати български граждани от средата на XVII век



50. Костюм на заможни български граждани от около втората половина на XVIII век



53. Мъжки костюми на заможни граждани от Тетевенско от около началото на XVIII век



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68. Мъжки и женски градски костюм от края на първата половина на XIX век



69. Мъжки и женски градски костюм от средата на XIX век със силно европейско модно влияние



74. Мъжки народен костюм и костюм а ла франга от началото на втората половина на XIX век



75. Мъжки и женски градски костюм от шестдесетте години на XIX век



77. Женска двупрестилчена носия от края на XIX век от с. Чупрене, Видинско



78. Женска двупрестилчена носия и мъжка чернодрешна носия от Русенско от края на XIX век



80. Мъжки белодрешен костюм от втората половина на XIX век и женски зимен сукман от края на XIX век от Видинско







83. Съвременна женска носия от сукманен тип от Батак (сукман с дълъг ръкав)





85. Женска носия от с. Подвис, Карнобатско, от края на XIX век



86. Копревщанска женска носия от края на XIX век



87. Женски костюм със сая от с. Сусам, Хасковско



88. Женски костюм със сая от с. Клокотница, Хасковско — края на XIX век





92. Женска двупрестилчена носия и мъжка белодрешна носия от с. Видбол, Видинско, от началото на XX век със силно градско влияние в материала, в кройката и в отделните съставки на костюма